

## TYING OSTRICH FEATHERS

A GLIMPSE OF ONE PHASE OF LIFE IN LITTLE ITALY.

There are Anna and Mary, for instance, who are only 13, but are in business for themselves. Work of nimble fingers provides for big families.

Whether or not, perhaps both, decided some two years ago that ostrich plumes in their natural state were not sufficient to adorn women's hats. The feather manufacturers met, thought, discussed and met again. Then presto! Nature's method was improved upon.

It was found that ostrich feathers could be made to fall as gracefully as a weeping willow tree. Even the straggly ends could become things of beauty as well as of commercial value. Willowing, as the process is called, consists in tying a separate tie to each short fluff of an ostrich plume until it has a length and grace unknown to the ostrich.

As no particular skill beyond deftness of fingers and rapidity is necessary in willowing ostrich feathers, what is more natural than that this should become a great home working trade? Consequently many Italian women applied to emment-fargers and contractors for fluff and

ladies do not let Italian girls go down street alone.

"Much money we pay in deposits; many feathers we carry back. Soon the boss tells us if you deposit \$100 you can take all the feathers you want." Then Mary and I we talk much to our mothers and fathers, and they say: "Mary's father and my father. We will lend you each \$100 to pay this deposit, and we now have many ladies working for us. Mary has twenty-eight working for her, a few of them in her shop, but most of them take the work home. We know our ladies very well. We are very careful. We do not give work to ladies we do not know. We give work only to ladies who have homes for their houses."

"My father and I we wrote to Twenty-eighth street and got a license to do work in my house. And now I give feathers to ladies only who have licenses. Many, many ladies do not have the certificate, but Mary and I are very particular. We do not want to lose our feathers. If the ladies work without a license inspector may come and take away the feathers. Very easy. The boss of the house reads to Twenty-eighth street and asks for a license. They give him a paper. He writes on the paper and the man comes to see if the ladies are clean, the fire escapes good or anybody sick with a catching disease in the house. If all things are all right pretty soon we get the license."

On the table are little piles of bricks every few yards. These bricks are used to hold the feathers firm while the fluff is being knotted.

No girls are working in the shop, but usually Mary has girls working here as well as in the tenements. Twenty-eight in the tenements, sometimes six, sometimes eight in the shop. Mary pays rent for her shop. The father rents the apartment, four rooms and the shop, for \$15 a month, and Mary pays \$5 a month for the shop.

Feather willowing is very good business indeed, she says. Every week she makes \$15 and in the busy season, which lasts eight or ten weeks, she clears \$40, \$45, \$50, sometimes \$60. Mary, unlike the extravagant American girl, does not spend her gold in riotous dressing. Oh, no! Her frugal Italian father banks all the money, so that by and by when she grows older and marries she will have a little nest egg toward a home of her own.

Anna and Mary were both born in America. Anna's parents came from Rome and she has the pretty oval face, dark eyes, deep brown wavy hair and olive coloring. Her manner is the one of natural courtesy and friendliness for which her nationality is known.

Mary does not look very well. There are dark circles under her blue eyes, and she says her head has been aching badly for five days. She is fair, with the dazzling whiteness of skin peculiar only to the Italian blonde. Mary's parents come from Naples, and Mary is endowed with a wealth of blonde hair full of golden tints.

Will the ladies let the reporter visit some of the homes to see them willow the plumes? Oh, yes, the ladies they will not mind.

We go out into the street; we climb the stairs of a house, one flight, two flights, three flights and enter the back room of the rear apartment of three rooms. A folding bed is in one corner; a clock on the shelf, above which a saint's picture hangs. A taper in a cup of oil burns below the picture. An open door shows a bedroom with a brass bedstead piled high with feather beds. Everything is scrupulously clean.

Seated at a table by a window overlooking the back yard is a group of four. Eight years ago they came from Sicily. Yes, yes, beautiful country, says the mother. She and the children are all dressed in black because the grandfather died two months ago.

"Do you like to make the feathers?" the mother was asked.

"They bring the money, why not?" is her reply. "My man, the good man, too, works on the horses, plasters many days. But many days there is no work, one day two days, three days, sometimes. And the winter no man makes the house and my man he not find work, and the children are seven and we must eat."

"Many ladies, many children help by the eads making feathers. My girl she nice girl, good girl, make the skirts. But the ladies they make a strike in her shop. No work. Many, many weeks the boss close the shop. My boy he work by Harlem market \$6 a week, \$4 a week he bring me, but he must eat, eat much."

"He work very early in the morning, 4, 5 o'clock, and I make all his washing too. I not have much time to tie the plume. I clean the house, wash the clothes, make the cooking, and my bambino, only finish but four months. Much work, much work."

"My children all good children. None of them go by the court. The street bad, bad no good streets. Bada boy on the street. He go by the court. My children make the feathers. The feathers are good, make good children. Street makes fight."

Papina she not tie good the feathers. Her eyes they no good. Many days she stay out of school. She bring a ticket from the school. The nurse she make Papina go to the dispensary. Maybe

perhaps the inspector come not again for a while year, maybe.

"How much can a lady do, you say?" the mother and girls at home make a feather in a day and a half. They get good pay, yes, \$1, \$1.10. We will get \$1.20 and \$1.30 from the downtown boss. I not have much time to tie the plume. I clean the house, wash the clothes, make the cooking, and my bambino, only finish but four months. Much work, much work."

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ANNA AND MARY, THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD FEATHER CONSTRUCTORS.

no money. And if it rains and the winter time, no pay.

"Poor man, what he can do? And we are seven. And my father, mother and the mother, the grandmother."

The grandmother is a picturesquely old woman with deep rugged lines in her olive skin, made by the sunshine and rain of the southern provinces where she worked out of doors on her father's place. She does not like America much.

"Good money, good people," she says, "but my country, good air, nice air down Italy. Blue sky, the water laughs in the bay. Down in my country peoples cook out of doors, make the wash out of doors, eat out of doors, tailor out of doors, make macaroni out of doors and the people laugh, laugh all the time, and we use the house in the night time to sleep."

On her head she wears a black shawl folded after the fashion of the Neapolitan peasant, and her earnings are big enough to set to as a dowry for the baby.

Once more we emerge on the street. Nearly every third house is a plume shop, bearing the sign, in Italian of course, "Wanted, women and children to work on feathers at home. Steady work."

Once more we climb the stairs and enter

Very poor girl, she not got a father. He fall off a house where he work three years ago.

"This girl she work very hard at home tying. She make \$1, \$2 a week. Sometimes her little sisters help her. She send to her grandmother in Italy for her books and then she go to the Board of Health and then they gave her working papers."

"She is quick, quick, and when the boss shake hard the feathers she does they do not drop off. The boss he give her white feather every night in busy season and she and her mother they tie it. Late, late they work 1, 2 o'clock and every week she makes much money, \$10, \$12, sometimes once \$15. But there are many children to eat, to go to school, to have the shoes."

## CITY THAT RESPECTS AGE

BOHN, THE OLD FOLKS HOME OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE.

Youngsters of 80 Looked Down Upon and the Little Old Ladies Are Inclined to Add a Year or Two. Even Old-Fashioned Bohns Have Before Them.

Bonn, on the Rhine, is the old folks' city of Germany. Besides the regiment stationed there and the few necessary tradespeople the population is made up of students and old people. The students are there because of the university and the old people are there because they find in Bonn quite the best place on earth to spend their last years.

One-quarter of the population consists of retirees, i.e., people who live on safe incomes, and of this quarter more than half are widows. In fact there are several streets in Bonn known as "widows' rows," which are lined with villas, ordinary houses or small apartments, according to the size of the safe incomes of the inhabitants.

Instead of trying to disguise their age as is the wont of womankind these old ladies have to keep tabs on each other that they do not add a year or two when no one is looking. They are all the loveliest little old ladies with the whitest hair and the pinkest cheeks, and they all dress more or less alike with little black bonnet, plain black gown with a bodice out a wee bit low at the neck, and a shoulder cape of lace or silk. There is only one exception to this rule, the one woman who tries to be younger than she is, but she is ostracized from the best society and is in a "class all by herself" with her lavender dresses, false curls and lingerie hats.

The old men of this city are no less interesting. Every day in the noon hour, when the children come home from school, they stop in front of the library windows of the most fashionable club in town and giggle at the display of bald heads lined up inside against a background of out-of-control newspapers. But they do not dare giggle audibly for to show any disrespect toward old citizens is to commit as grave a crime in Bonn as to insult the Kaiser in Berlin.

At night after dinner is the real time when the graveyards assemble. Many, many years ago, when the club was first established, there was a group of eleven men who banded together and agreed to meet at the Stahmsch, a table reserved for them, every day. Of those eleven six are still living, such a specimen of joyful old age. First there is the General, who walks as straight as a railroad and who salutes his comrades in the military fashion, then there is the retired Mayor, who would like to walk the Mayor be used to, but is now forced to let his shoulders droop under the weight of his years and his cares. The third is the proud possessor of the longest and the whitest beard in the place, and the fourth glories in the fact that he never asked a doctor a question in his life. The fifth counts ninety-two years to his credit, but so far so hard, once his looks all day long that he does not find the time to attend the club regularly. He used to walk there and back in all sorts of weather, a distance of a mile or so, but now he has to ride one way, much to his disgust. However, he won't admit that it's his growing old and insists that it's only rheumatism he's got in his bones. Then he is reassured in his belief that he is still very young, when the ninety-five-year-old

brothers in the navy. From the Blue Jacket.

Not long ago we mentioned the enlistment of three brothers in the navy on the same date and that they were under training at Newport. Since then the Navy Department has issued an order that these brothers shall be kept together while under training and transferred to the same ship. It will be interesting to learn how long it will be possible to keep them together. It has been noticed that the Navy Department is always willing to stretch a point to keep brothers together in the service or help one to reach a ship on which a near relative is already serving.

grandfather of the company comes up to him, puts him on the back and says, "Well, how are you, my boy?"

Perhaps it is because they had such regular lives that these old people are so full of life, so hale and hearty. It is between 10 and 11 in sunny mornings they are all taking a morning walk, and in the afternoon, when they are not enjoying one of the 1,000 little Rhine excursions, they are taking a second. They do not just amble around a flower bed in a park and come home again, but they set out with a definite purpose to see a definite thing and they get there with a determination that is remarkable.

Meals of course, as everything else in their households, are regulated by the clock, and bedtime never varies from one night to the next except perhaps for the celebration of a birthday. For birthdays in Germany, and especially in Bonn, are extraordinary occasions.

Every summer when the holiday time set in they all go off on a longer trip, and those who feel that they cannot leave the comfort of their homes, from blinds and pretend that they have migrated with the rest. When they are all home again they go off on "bats" together, just like the young people, and though many of them are restricted to one glass of wine or even further to "soft" drinks they manage to have as good a time as any one else in the city. What is more they add to the gaiety of the youth on board by their jolly good humor and their funny old jokes, and when the genial Germans begin to sing they join in with more good will than music in their voices.

In the winter time they go to everything there is to go to, opera, concert, theatre and even the cinematograph show long after they can see and hear everything that is going on. It is not infrequent that in the midst of a well strung story about one of the honorable inhabitants of Bonn will say in his loudest tones, because he doesn't know the power of his own voice, "What long pauses they do make between the scenes, the night!" But the others of the audience are so well used to the interruptions and so well trained that they do not move a muscle.

Many an ancient citizen attends the cinematograph show regularly, but usually he takes a companion to explain what is going on in other words, to supply him with the eyes that are not his.

All Bonn turns around its white haired citizens. Young blood doesn't play a part here that it does elsewhere. Any one desiring to catch a certain boat or train must take at least one street car ahead of the one on schedule in order to make it, for if a venerable citizen waves his stick or a nice old lady her umbrella and the motorman sees either coming half a block away he waits, and with several "ancient angels" blocking the way is it a wonder the cars fail to make schedule time? It is only the stranger that ever dares make any objection to this state of affairs, for the natives are patient in the hope that the same consideration will be shown them when they grow old, and the conductors know that they will get a tip for their consideration. If ever any leniency is shown anywhere in the German Empire about that world famous "Vorboten" sign then it is toward the old citizens of Bonn. And that is the greatest sign of respect and deference which any official of the Vaterland can show, for he does it at the risk of his own post.

Brothers in the Navy.

From the Blue Jacket.

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## Corset Bulletin

BRANCH NEMO FACTORY  
STUTTGART, GERMANY  
FOR THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT

BRANCH NEMO FACTORY  
BRISTOL, ENGLAND  
FOR THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Vol. 1

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 25, 1910

No. 1

### SALUTATORY

Our leadership in the corset industry makes it our duty to promptly explain our new inventions to our world-wide clientele.

Every woman knows how little actual price she finds in the "corset article" on the "Women's Page;" but most women know that everything in corsetry that's really new and valuable is always a Nemo product.

Read the Nemo Corset Bulletin every week. Then you'll know all that Corset Science is doing to help you look your best, and be happy or stylish, which means the same.

### Self-Reducing No. 320

A Great Favorite at \$3.00.

Best reducing corset made at the price. For tall or medium stout figures. Long skirt—great reduction, perfect ease. Four Lastikops Hose Supporters. Will not wear the corset. Worn also by many slender women who need support. Sizes 19 to 36—\$3.00.

### No. 318

is a similar model, but lower bust and under arm, for short waisted women—\$3.00.

### Our Lastikops Webbing

Has Created New Possibilities in Corset-Making

Our great invention, Lastikops Webbing, enables us to produce a new and perfect new results in corset-making. Lastikops Webbing is firm enough to give complete support and long wear, but elastic enough to assure perfect ease and increased comfort.

It is the only elastic fabric in existence that will not "give out" and get "strange," as you know all other elastic do, and you'll find that all the imitations of Lastikops Webbing are just as unreliable and disappointing as the old elastics.

### Newest Corset Invention

For Slender Women

Lastikops Corset (Model No. 330) \$3.00

Not every woman needs abdominal reduction; but all women who wear corsets need abdominal support.

FACT: Lots of slender women are buying Nemo Self-Reducing Corsets Nos. 522 and 523 in the smallest sizes (20 and 21); and we have had thousands of calls for sizes 18 and 19.

THIS PROVES—that a host of slender women are willing to wear a corset that is not designed for slight figures, in order to secure the perfect support of the Lastikops Bandlet.

AND NOW! Thanks to our great invention, Lastikops Webbing, slender women have a PERFECT SUPPORTING CORSET ALL THEIR OWN—as great a godsend as our Self-Reducing Corset is to stout women.

Go to any good store and ask for Nemo No. 330. When you put it on, you'll say: "What comfort!" Such a grateful sense of support—none of that cramped, bearing-down feeling, no matter how tightly you lace it.

Then you'll note how trim your figure is—long lines, and fashionable slenderness with greatly increased ease, freedom of movement, ample

breathing space—perfect style and good health in combination.

REASON: A broad band of semi-elastic Lastikops Webbing slants across each side, following the natural curve of the abdomen, and provides gentle but firm support for the delicate internal organs.

Nemo Corsets have brought health, comfort and style to millions of stout women. Our new Lastikops Corset, No. 330, will be a blessing to other millions of their slender sisters.

### The Failure of Imitation

No imitation is ever as good as the original. Imitations cannot lead—they have to follow.

All imitations of Nemo Self-Reducing Corsets have been flat failures. The present imitations of Lastikops Webbing are equally worthless.

Look for the word "Nemo," and accept no substitute—then you'll get satisfaction and your money's worth.

### New Reducing Corset

For Short Stout Figures

With Lastikops Bandlet

Nemo No. 522, with its wonderful Lastikops Bandlet, is the greatest corset success of the age—has no equal as a figure-reducer. But it isn't quite suitable for a short stout figure; so we have made a new model—

No. 523

at \$5.00

—especially for stout women who are short-waisted. Has the same Lastikops Bandlet.

It is made of fine Self-Reducing No. 523 with Lastikops Bandlet. White, light blue, long hip; sizes 20 to 36—\$5.00.

No. 522 is a similar model, but for tall or medium stout figures—\$5.00.

Lastikops Hose Supporters